



Mike Demos

## THE ROUND

Mike Vivenzio



## TABLE

This week:  
Matt Friedman

James Schlucter

Matt Friedman

Barry Bonds is one of the most hated guys in all of sports. His teammates don't like the old man who sits back in his recliner by his lockers. That's not a typo; he gets two of them. Most baseball fans don't really like him because he isn't a likeable guy. He does his work and then decides to go home rather than try to give himself a squeaky clean image through advertisements or newspaper quotes.

Suspicious, yet no proof, say Bonds may have used steroids to get ahead and hit a record 73 homers in the 2001 campaign, turning even more people against him and making him into a media magnet. One of the best baseball players of all time has lost his love of the game and is on the brink of retirement, thanks to immense media pressure and scrutiny.

For those who have let it slip their mind, Bonds was already one of the best players in baseball before he and his game expanded to a new level in 2001. Bonds's first three of his unheard-of seven National League MVP awards came before 2001. He hit no fewer than 33 home runs every season between 1992 and 2004. That's right: even in the days when Barry was just a rail-thin outfielder in his twenties, he could pad the stats.

Then, he bulked up and hit 73 home runs, followed by the BALCO investigations involving his personal trainer. Now, Bonds has taken center stage in the negativity surrounding juiced-up baseball.

Reporters, including ESPN's Pedro Gomez, have followed Bonds everywhere but the bedroom (one would hope) in order to bother him about steroids and his trainer. He is fed up with it, and in recent television appearances he has appeared to be mentally exhausted and fragile. In Bonds's latest tirade, he said he would retire after this season because the game wasn't fun anymore and sarcastically thanked the media for all the "criticism" and "dogging" he has received.

The media has been unfair to Bonds and taken the joy away from his job. Yes, baseball has been tarnished by the 'roids rage, but putting the crosshairs solely on Bonds is an injustice. Baseball was lackadaisical when it came to cleaning up the game, and there isn't as much coverage of guys who tested positive, like Rafael Palmeiro.

We will probably never know for sure which of the recent home run kings has taken the needle in order to pump up their stats. Since nobody can be sure about Bonds, it might be smart for baseball to salute one of the best players of his time in what may be his final season. That is, if the national media is willing to let such crazy things happen.

# First dance step begins in Charleston

James Schlucter and Kris Moody

Reporters

### Men's

The men's Phoenix basketball team seems to be counted out in the Southern Conference Tournament because of one underlying reason: the team's inability to win road games.

The last game the Phoenix won on the road was Jan. 9 when they beat Chattanooga by 18 points. Struggles on the road may cause problems in the SoCon Tournament, but Coach Ernie Nestor and his players seem to think the neutral court won't be a problem.

"We have struggled on the road, but it's not because of the location," Nestor said. "In many of the games we have lost, we have made ourselves our own opponent."

With last Saturday's victory over UNC-G, Elon finished second in the Southern Conference and will automatically advance to the quarterfinals of the tournament, where they will face the winner of the UNC-G/Western Carolina game. Elon defeated UNC-G both times during the regular season and split the season series against Western Carolina.

The playoff effort will most likely be without their second-leading scorer, Montell Watson. According to Nestor, Watson won't be released to practice until Wednesday and even then it's questionable if he will be healthy to play in Elon's quarterfinal match-up.

The players won't be satisfied until they make a run at winning the tournament, even if they have to do so on the road

"We have to do it on the road, with no crowd behind us," senior Jackson Atoyebi said.

### Women's

The Elon women's basketball team has landed the sixth seed entering the SoCon tournament this weekend.

The team finished the regular season with an overall record of 12-15 and a conference record of 7-11. As the sixth seed, the Phoenix will play third seed Davison.

Elon played Davidson twice this season, losing on both occasions. Despite the losses, the team feels prepared for its third game against Davidson.

"We're confident," Coach Brenda Paul said. "We don't think there is any team that's completely out of our league."

Even the men's team has helped the women get ready for the tournament. A couple of the players have practiced with the team to provide them with a look at a different style of play.

Paul said that the key to advancing deep into the tournament will be the defense of the Phoenix. Defense is something that has been stressed throughout the entire season for the team.

Contact James Schlucter or Kris Moody at [pendulum@elon.edu](mailto:pendulum@elon.edu) or 278-7247.



Matt Gannon/ Photo Editor

Kitara McMoore and the women's team hope to upset many of the top seeds in the women's bracket, while the men hope to use the number two seed to their advantage and knock off a lower seed.

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